MEETING MINUTES

EMPIRE STATION COMPLEX
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

DATE/TIME:	**June 15, 2021 / 4:00pm EST**	**SUBJECT:**	**Urban Design, Use Groups, and Growth Framework**
WEEK #:	**8**	**MEETING LEADER:**	**FX Collaborative and ESD (with Vornado)**

*The following minutes prepared by Empire State Development (ESD) are a summary of the meeting and are intended to capture only the main points made in the meeting. Discrepancies should be reported to Gabriella Green at ESD **within three (3) calendar days** of distribution of this document.*

PARTICIPANTS:

NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY
Hon. Gale Brewer	Manhattan Borough President
Robert Atterbury	U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler
Robert Gottheim	U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler
Betsy Schmid	U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney
Maia Berlow	NYS Senator Brad Hoylman
Jacob Priley	NYS Senator Brad Hoylman
Dario Quinsac	NYS Senator Robert Jackson
Phil Marius	NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
Wendi Paster	NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
Tim Anderson	Manhattan Borough President's Office
Lizette Chaparro	Manhattan Borough President's Office
Laurie Hardjowirogo	NYC Councilman Corey Johnson
Andrew Lassiter	NYC Council
Raju Mann	NYC Council
Kyle Bragg	32BJ
Denis Johnston	32BJ
Marrissa Williams	32BJ
Santos Rodriguez	Building & Construction Trades Council of NY
Kevin Finnegan	Labor lawyer, formerly 1199
Christine Berthet	Community Board 4
Paul Devlin	Community Board 4
Jeffrey LeFrancois	Community Board 4
Lowell Kern	Community Board 4
Vikki Barbero	Community Board 5
EJ Kalafarski	Community Board 5
Layla Law-Gisiko	Community Board 5
Clayton Smith	Community Board 5
Eugene Sinigalliano	Resident Representative
Basha Gerhards	Real Estate Board of New York
Dan Biederman	34th Street Partnership

NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY
Dan Pisark	34th Street Partnership
Fred Cerullo	Grand Central Partnership
Brook Jackson	Partnership for New York City
Hope Knight	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
Elizabeth Goldstein	The Municipal Art Society of NY
Tom Wright	Regional Plan Association
Liam Blank	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Felicia Park-Rogers	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Renae Reynolds	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Wendy Hilliard	Women's Sports Foundation
Tokumbo Shobowale	The New School
Marilyn Taylor	University of Pennsylvania
Larry Lennon	MTA
Peter Matusewitch	MTA
Robert Paley	MTA
William Schwartz	MTA
Petra Messick	Amtrak
Ryan Morson	Amtrak
Craig Shulz	Amtrak
Sharon Tepper	Amtrak
Jennifer Sta. Ines	NYC DOT
Edith Hsu-Chen	NYC Department of Planning
Joseph Quinty	NJ Transit
Deniz Onder	FX Collaborative
John Schuyler	FX Collaborative
Amy Shell	FX Collaborative
Toby Snyder	FX Collaborative
Chi Chan	AKRF
Connor Lacefield	AKRF
Claire Weisz	WXY

NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY	NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY
Chris West	Foster + Partners		
Judy Kessler	Vornado		
Barry Langer	Vornado		
Carl Weisbrod	Vornado (Consultant)		
Audrey Wilson	Vornado		
Terence Cho	ESD		
Anabel Frias	ESD		
Gabriella Green	ESD		
Holly Leicht	ESD		
Phil Maguire	ESD		
Marion Phillips	ESD		
Angel Santana	ESD		
Rachel Shatz	ESD		
Noura von Briesen	ESD		

Location: Zoom

Item #	Description / Discussion

1. INTRODUCTION AND HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS

- Marion Phillips, Senior VP of Community Relations at ESD, reminded all attendees to list their full name and affiliation in the Zoom Participant List.
- Marion advised the CACWG that any members who are having difficulty logging into Huddle should contact Angel Santana for further assistance. All CACWG members are encouraged to review and download the materials posted to Huddle for the meeting minutes, the presentations, and follow-up materials.
- Marion asked CACWG members to please remain respectful of each other when providing comments or asking questions during the CACWG meetings.
- Gabriella Green, CACWG Facilitator, announced that ESD will set up a folder on Huddle where members can upload their comments and suggested edits on the Neighborhood Conditions Study ("NCS"). ESD will take all comments into consideration in updating the NCS. CACWG members may also email their comments on the NCS to Gabriella Green.

2. FXC/ESD PRESENTATION: INTRODUCTION

- John Schuyler, Partner at FX Collaborative ("FXC"), previewed the presentation, which covered the building design controls outlined in the draft General Project Plan ("GPP") and Design Guidelines. These building controls would be in lieu of local zoning and would specify enforceable parameters for future development at the Empire Station Complex Project ("ESC Project") sites.

- John first reviewed some of the major concepts introduced the prior week during CACWG Meeting #7.
  - A guiding vision in the ESC GPP is to improve the Project area's connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods, the city, and the region at large by:
    - Improving access to transit and the quality of the commuting experience
    - Improving the quality of the public realm throughout the district; and
    - Catalyzing world-class, high-density, transit-integrated development.
  - Based on feedback at the prior CACWG meeting, FXC has begun thinking about refinements to the ESC GPP master plan, particularly with respect to the public realm.
    - The public realm needs to be considered more broadly and include both indoor & outdoor spaces and public & private spaces.

- The ESC GPP reflects many time-tested planning principles and zoning and bulk controls, including locations of transit entrances and connections and public space, in addition to the following building controls which were the focus of this presentation:
  - Ground floor controls
  - Base heights and setbacks
  - Tower controls
  - Program/uses
  - Density

3. FXC/ESD PRESENTATION: DISTRICT PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS FRAMEWORK

- The ESC GPP framework provides a unique opportunity for substantial increases in sidewalk widths and the creation of significant connections both above and below grade. The goal of the framework plan is to enhance connectivity between and among below- and above-grade spaces, including the transit network and open spaces, through urban design and building controls.
  - Pedestrian zones would be expanded along the avenues within the ESC Project area and connected to well-defined open spaces at the avenues between 31st and 33rd Streets, creating "public rooms." These "public rooms" would create a sense of place for the district, provide more space for pedestrians, and serve as front doors for the renovated and expanded Penn Station and Moynihan Train Hall ("Moynihan").
  - The bases of the new buildings would have active, transparent ground floors that would extend the public realm into the buildings via new entrances into the transit network and Penn and other public uses.
  - The bases of the buildings would have maximum height limits and setbacks to provide light, air, and a sense of scale.
  - The framework would also foster a varied, dynamic skyline.
  - Ambitious sustainability goals, in combination with its location adjacent to the country's busiest transit hub, would make the ESC district the most sustainable neighborhood in New York City (the "City"). The future buildings would also take advantage of new sustainability technologies as they are developed.

4. FXC/ESD PRESENTATION: DEVELOPMENT LOTS

- Holly Leicht, Executive VP of Real Estate Development & Planning at ESD, explained that the ESC Draft Scope of Work ("Draft Scope"), released in July 2020, considered commercial office uses on all eight sites with retail use on the ground floor and potentially hotel use on Sites 1 and 4.
- ESD began studying residential uses on the ESC Project sites after receiving feedback at the July 2020 public scoping meeting and in public comments expressing desire for mixed-use development in the area. As a result, ESD developed a "residential alternative" that was included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS), allowing for residential use on Sites 1, 4, and 8.
  - The Final Environmental Impact Statement ("FEIS") and final GPP will include the studied residential alternatives for Sites 1, 4, and 8. Of those sites, ESD believes that Site 1 is particularly well suited for residential use because of its lower scale and proximity to a residential neighborhood.
  - Residential use is already permitted on Site 4 as outlined in the Moynihan GPP. However, a change from that GPP in the ESC GPP would be to require that Site 4, as well as Sites 1 and 8, would have 30% of any residential units be permanently affordable. If all three sites were built residential, approximately 1,800 units could be built on them, roughly 540 of which would be affordable.
  - If the southward expansion of Penn Station is selected as the preferred alternative, ESD would likely become the ultimate owner of Sites 1, 2, and 3 and would likely issue one or more requests

for proposals ("RFP") to develop these sites. As is often done in its RFPs, ESD would be able to require or include a preference for certain uses, such as community facility space or below-market office space, as part of any future development.

- Phil Maguire, VP of Design & Construction at ESD, presented an overview of each development site in the ESC GPP.
  - The proposed gross square footages ("GSF") and floor area ratio equivalents ("FAR EQ") for each site are:

SITE	PROPOSED USE*	GSF	FAR EQ
1A ("dog leg")	Office, Residential or Hotel	413,000	9
1B	Office	870,460	24
1 (total)	Office, Residential or Hotel	1,283,460 (total)	16.1 (blended)
2A (west)	Office	3,470,000	33
2B (east)	Office	2,822,000	33
2 (total)**	Office	6,292,000	33
3	Office	1,769,000	33
4***	Office or Residential	1,100,000	25
5	Office	1,900,000	33
6	Office	2,100,000	31
7	Office	2,600,000	26
8	Office or Residential	2,600,000	26

**Retail use is assumed for the ground floors and/or basements for all sites.*
***Site 2 would also include a public open space that would be 29,626 SF in area in between the buildings on Sites 2A and 2B.*
***Allowable GSF and FAR EQ shown above was previously approved by the State and City as part of the Moynihan GPP.*

  - **Site 1**: While Site 1 could be developed as a single building, ESD may require or allow it to be developed as two separate buildings. Site 1A on the west side of the block (the "dog leg") would have a maximum 400-foot height limit in deference to Moynihan and the lower-scale neighborhood to the south. Site 1B, fronting on Eighth Avenue, would begin a step-up in scale to the 780 block.
  - **Site 2**: Site 2 would be developed as two buildings (Sites 2A and 2B), with a large public open space between them to break up the current superblock. To encourage buildings of varying size, the Site 2A footprint on the west side is proposed to be 20% larger than the Site 2B footprint. In addition, roughly 100,000 square feet ("SF") of Site 2A would be mechanical space to power both the existing Penn and the Expansion.
  - **Site 3**: Site 3 would be developed as a single building.
    - Sites 1-3 would not have basements because railroad infrastructure would occupy the space beneath the buildings. As a result, the buildings' elevator cores would have to be raised above street level.
  - **Site 4**: The density, allowable uses and new Penn entrance requirement that were approved for this site in the Moynihan GPP would remain consistent, but any residential use would have to include 30% permanently affordable units.
  - **Site 5**: At the intersection of two wide streets (34th street and Seventh Avenue), Site 5 is a "gateway" to the ESC district and provides the opportunity to move the existing 34th Street entrance to the Long Island Railroad ("LIRR") from its somewhat inconspicuous location midblock to the corner, where it will have greater visibility and prominence.

- **Site 6**: Site 6 works with Site 5 to create a "gateway" to the district, together establishing a unified streetwall that doesn't currently exist.
- **Site 7:** The proposed development on Site 7 would be the same as what was previously approved for this site by the City through a special permit that expired.
- **Site 8**: Together with Site 7, Site 8 would allow for the renovation and expansion of the former Gimbel's passageway beneath 33rd Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, or construction of a new underground pedestrian connection beneath 32nd Street.
    - Sites 4-8 would have basements, allowing for a network of underground pedestrian passageways as well as subterranean retail.

5. FXC/ESD PRESENTATION: GROUND FLOOR CONTROLS

- John Schuyler explained that the GPP and Design Guidelines establish master planning controls with the same effect as zoning for a long-term buildout. All graphics and renderings shown in the presentation are illustrative, as the buildings, public realm and transit improvements have not been designed yet.
- Ground floor controls help ensure an active, integrated public realm. The interior and exterior ground floors of the ESC Project sites would potentially include lobby space, transit entrances, retail, community uses, loading entrances, building core, and "back of house" uses and controls.
    - Consistent with comments by Professor Marilyn Taylor during CACWG Meeting #7, FXC is looking at interior public space as part of the public realm network.
- Site 2 (Block 780), where there has been extensive planning coordination between ESD and MTA for new transit entrances in the overbuild, would have at least five new major transit entrances along the south side of 31st Street and several new entrances on 30th Street. These new entrances, located on Seventh and Eighth Avenues and midblock, would increase access capacity into and out of the Penn Expansion station and allow daylight into the station concourse.
- The new station entrances, combined with active ground floors, promote connectivity and permeability among the building, street and transit components. The entrance at One Vanderbilt is an example of how a transit entrance can contribute to an active ground floor.
- As explained previously, a constraint to the development and planning of the Penn Expansion blocks is the location of the buildings on top of the new station concourse. To protect station concourse ceiling heights and maintain a superior passenger experience, no basements would be built on these blocks, and mechanical spaces serving the buildings and the station, elevator pits and other back-of-house spaces would be at the ground level. As a result, the lobbies for all buildings on the Penn Expansion blocks would be pushed to the second floor of each building.
- The drawings shown are just illustrative since the buildings and Penn Expansion have yet to be designed, but they provide a good sense of what the size and locations of transit entrances, open space and loading locations would likely be.
- The GPP framework adheres to New York City Department of City Planning's ("DCP") strategies to promote a vibrant street life. These include specifications on how much retail frontage is permitted and limits on street-level lobby space.
    - For commercial lobbies, the GPP proposes two categories:
        - Type 1 (typical) allows a maximum 40' street frontage per building/per block frontage for a commercial lobby. This is the typical as-of-right lobby frontage allowance in many parts of the City.
        - Type 2 (enhanced) incentivizes lobbies that contribute to the public realm; to quality as "enhanced," the lobby must have interior connections to transit, retail or a community facility. There are three sub-categories of the Type 2 commercial lobby:
            i. Primary: maximum 100' street frontage, one lobby per building
            ii. Secondary: maximum 60' street frontage, one lobby per building
            iii. Tertiary: maximum 40' street frontage, one lobby per remaining building block frontage

- The GPP also proposes requiring that corners of buildings facing a street or public open space be occupied by retail, a transit entrance or community facility use to promote a vibrant neighborhood and streetscape.
- Overall, the GPP would require that a minimum of 35% of a building's entire frontage be devoted to an active use (i.e., retail, transit entrance or community facility).
- Some examples of buildings with activated ground floors and porosity to encourage mobility and interconnectivity include the ground floor of the New York Times Building and the lobby of Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center (see Slide 36).

6. FXC/ESD PRESENTATION: BUILDING BASE CONTROLS

- The base heights of existing buildings in the Penn district are varied but predominantly high, contributing to a "high-shouldered neighborhood." The building bases (walls that run sheer from the street) range from 200' to over 300'.
  - The draft GPP proposes a maximum base height of 200', but this is still being discussed with DCP and subject to feedback from the CACWG and public.
- The GPP also provides flexibility on streetwall continuity at the ground floor, allowing for expansion of the public realm and more pedestrian circulation space.
- Slide 41 shows examples of base building controls that activate the streetscape in various ways such as by elevating the building base or providing a setback at street corners. Lincoln Center and Four World Trade Center are two such examples.
- Barry Langer, Executive VP of Development at Vornado, said that he is focused on what a pedestrian sees and experiences at street level.
  - At One Penn Plaza, Vornado is converting a former dark, one-story storefront into a two-story retail and public amenity space that will feature a gym, restaurant, conference center and other amenity spaces to activate the streetwall.
  - At Two Penn, facing Plaza 33, Vornado is constructing a 300-seat auditorium on the second floor, with restaurants underneath at grade.
  - Vornado is also renovating and expanding transit entrances at its properties. At One Penn, Vornado is partnering with MTA to create a new entrance to Penn Station on 34th Street with two new escalators and an ADA elevator. At Two Penn Plaza, Vornado, in partnership with Amtrak, will rebuild an entrance on 32nd Street and install a new escalator and ADA elevator.

7. FXC/ESD PRESENTATION: TOWER BULK CONTROLS

- The GPP proposes setbacks that range from 15' to 25' as measured from the property line.
  - Wider setbacks would be located predominantly along avenues to bring more daylight to the street level and ease sidewalk congestion where the heaviest pedestrian volumes are found.
  - Side streets would have 15' setbacks.
- The GPP also considers "inside-out" controls by preserving core-to-wall dimensions for effective tower floor plates and overall efficient buildings.
- The maximum width of the buildings proposed by the GPP after considering the required sidewalk widenings and initial setbacks are:
  - Site 1A: 63.75'
  - Sites 1B, 2, 3, 7, and 8: 167.5'
  - Sites 4, 5, and 6: 172.5'
- For over 100 years, New York City has had different approaches to controlling a tower's bulk to maintain daylight and air on the street, encourage innovative building design, and contribute to a varied and dynamic skyline. Slide 47 shows a list of some of the City's approaches to achieve these goals. FXC has reviewed the City's past approaches to controlling tower bulk and is proposing a new approach as described in the GPP to streamline implementation in achieving these same goals.
- A challenge is finding the right balance between compressing building bulk and controlling for height within a given lot area. As the upper tower of a building gets more slender and less bulky, it pushes the

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tower higher. This may result in less desirable smaller floorplates and become more expensive to build. Conversely, if the building doesn't taper, it can have negative impact on daylight on the street and may not be as aesthetically pleasing.

- The GPP proposes a maximum tower lot coverage that is limited at a percentage of a building's total height.
  - For most of the sites, the maximum tower lot coverage would be 60% of the lot area as measured at 75% of the building's overall height.
  - For Site 3, the maximum tower lot coverage would be 70% of the lot area as measured at 75% of the building's overall height. This higher lot coverage percentage is proposed because of the site's relatively small size and greater number of development constraints.
  - For Site 1A, the maximum tower lot coverage would be 65% of the lot area as measured at 75% of the building's overall height. This higher lot coverage percentage would allow for more efficient floors to be built for housing.
- The GPP does not propose a height limit for any sites except 1A. No central business districts in Manhattan have height limits. DCP advised that a fixed height limit tends to yield a more uniform and static skyline since buildings are built to the maximum height. By proposing to connect tower lot coverage to a building's overall height, the two factors become proportional to each other and in combination with different parcel sizes, should lead to buildings of varying heights.
- Tests performed by FXC at varying percentages of lot coverage and overall building height informed the ratios selected in the design guidelines Design Guidelines as the best to maintain a balance between tapering the form of a tower to maintain daylight at street level and allowing for efficient floorplates.

8. FXC/ESD PRESENTATION: RECAP AND LOOKING AHEAD

- Slide 58 summarizes the ESC GPP controls and shows similarities to other as-of-right zoning and other controls in the East Midtown Rezoning.
- Future CACWG sessions will cover public transit and public realm improvements.

9. Q&A AND COMMENTS

- Paul Devlin, CB4
  - CB4 encourages that all loading docks be located inside buildings and generally prefers consistent streetwalls.
  - What is the height of Moynihan and how does that height compare to the GPP building heights?
  - CB4 is concerned about how setting back a building's streetwall would impact the height of the building and the resulting viewline.
  - How was 33 FAR determined to be appropriate for three of the GPP sites?
  - How will the proposed GPP buildings impact sunlight patterns and shadows on the area, including Moynihan and open spaces?
    - ESD will follow up with answers to these questions.
- EJ Kalafarski, CB5
  - If building Madison Square Garden ("MSG") on top of Penn Station is considered a mistake, are we making the same mistake by building commercial buildings on top of the new Penn Expansion train station on Block 780?
    - Phil Maguire answered that the development of Block 780 and the construction of the below-grade station have been planned holistically from the start and will continue to be coordinated throughout design and construction. ESD and FX have worked with MTA and their FXC team to analyze structural schematics and understand how to bring the gravity and lateral loads of the buildings on Site 2 down so that they don't interfere with the station platforms and tracks. The planning and construction of MSG differs from that of Block 780 because it was not coordinated with the existing Penn Station.

- It's critical to ensure that the above-grade development on Block 780 not preclude future rail infrastructure improvements. Are you planning for changes that may be needed in the future, including through-running?

- Tokombo Shobowale, The New School
  - The number of parking spaces permitted by the GPP should be reduced, and the number of bicycle parking spaces should be increased and placed inside the buildings.
  - The GPP and Design Guidelines should articulate the minimum amount of daylight that must enter into the station on Block 780.
  - The 35% of a building's frontage that the GPP would require be devoted to an active use (i.e., retail, transit entrance or a community facility) seems too low to truly promote a vibrant streetfront. At least half of a building's frontage should be devoted to active uses.
  - Could you give more examples and a better definition of the "enhanced lobby" concept?
    - Typically, a commercial building lobby only serves the occupants of the building and is void of interaction between public and private uses. The enhanced lobby envisioned in the Design Guidelines would have a connection to public uses like retail or a transit entrance or would serve in a through-block capacity to ensure that the lobby is not solely a secluded private space.
  - Tokombo expressed concern that the enhanced lobby would not prove successful, citing indoor privately-owned public spaces ("POPs") that essentially remain private.
- Christine Berthet, CB4
  - Christine is concerned that lobby setbacks would not provide meaningful circulation space for pedestrians but instead would attract homeless persons. Christine discouraged any additional streetwall recess beyond the sidewalk widenings described in the GPP.
  - An "enhanced lobby" needs to have more than an escalator or access to a transit station to truly activate the street. The GPP and Design Guidelines could encourage small retail stores in the lobby facing the street and place transit access points behind those stores.
  - The ceiling height of the retail needs to be regulated. Retail spaces with tall ceilings only attract retail chain stores that can afford to pay high rents, and these chain stores do not activate streets.
  - Are the buildings on the Penn Expansion blocks going to constrain the height of the station? What will be the height of the ceiling in the Penn Expansion station?
    - Although the new station has not been designed yet, once developers are selected for the Penn Expansion blocks overbuild, they would work with the Railroads to ensure coordination as the new station is built. This would ensure that the above-grade developments are integrated with the station below. In addition, as mentioned previously, mechanical spaces for the station will occupy the ground floors of the buildings on the Penn Expansion blocks, reinforcing the necessary integration of the buildings and the station below.
  - The Design Guidelines should prohibit parking in the new buildings and should devote substantial space inside the buildings for deliveries. The ESC master plans should also consider placing the ConEd vaults inside the buildings.
  - View lines should be protected.
- Robert Atturbury, Rep. Nadler
  - How were the floor area ratios ("FAR") proposed in the GPP for the new buildings determined?
    - In deciding the FARs proposed in the GPP, ESD reviewed the FARs approved in the Hudson Yards and East Midtown rezonings, areas that "book end" the ESC Project area. The FARs in the GPP are comparable to those districts, with the goal of filling in the gap

that the Penn area represents to connect Midtown's central business districts east to west.

- It seems like if the lot coverage could be expanded and the building heights could be capped, the buildings would not necessarily have to be built higher as shown in the presentation.
- Are there other controls so that developers do not use spaces such as mechanical voids to increase the height of a building more than necessary? Besides FAR are there other controls for building height?
  - Phil Maguire responded that it is not likely a developer will use mechanical voids as a tactic to artificially build a tower higher. That situation is sometimes seen for residential buildings, but not usually for commercial buildings when height is not limited.
  - Site 1A (the "dog leg") has a height limit of 400'. The other ESC Project sites do not, as is consistent for all other CBDs in Manhattan. DCP does not impose a height limit to encourage a varied skyline.

- Dario Quinsac, Sen. Jackson
  - Will development on Site 3 impact future through-running below grade to the east?
    - Development on Site 3 will not preclude future through-running.
  - Would New York State own the ground floors of the future developments on Sites 1, 2, and 3?
    - If the southward expansion of Penn Station is selected as the preferred alternative, New York State would likely take ownership of Sites 1, 2, and 3 and enter into long-term leases with the future developers of those sites. Through the leases, New York State would have the ability to retain control over some spaces in the buildings.
- Felicia Park-Rogers, TSTC
  - Have there been plans made for subway operations (e.g., A/C/E and 1/2/3 lines) to accommodate the increased passenger traffic that will be traveling through Penn Reconstruction, Penn Expansion and the expanded PABT?
    - The GPP's transit improvements address physical changes to accommodate increased passenger loads. Operational changes would be implemented on an as-needed basis through ongoing service monitoring.
  - Have the Railroads considered building a station above ground on the Penn Expansion Blocks?
    - The former taxiway between 2 Penn Plaza and MSG would become a glass train hall that would create a street presence for Penn Station on 31st and 33rd Streets and bring light into the underground station via a two-block long, 100' tall skylight. Across 31st Street, the glass train hall would be extended to 30th street within the building on Site 2B, located just east of the 30,000 SF public open space on Block 780. Together, the continuous train hall from 33rd to 30th Street and the public open space on Block 780 would create a unified public realm.
    - The goal on the Penn Expansion blocks is to create as many at-grade entrances and exits as possible into Penn and the transit network so that people are dispersed, and congestion is avoided.
  - If the Railroads asked for an above-grade train station on the Penn Expansion blocks, would that be considered?
    - Peter Matusewitch, VP at MTA Construction & Development and Project CEO for the Penn Station Master Plan, replied that the Railroads' priority for Penn Expansion is smooth integration with existing Penn Station, which is primarily achieved through the below-grade extension of the north-south concourses from existing Penn Station to Penn Expansion. One Vanderbilt proves that well-designed building lobbies can create a very visible successful connection to the below-grade transit network. The new midblock

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train hall between 33rd and 31st Streets will continue on Block 780, but a major stand-alone train hall above the Expansion is not a priority.
    - Sharon Tepper, Director of Planning & Development at Amtrak, confirmed that the Railroads have been working together to look at building new transit access points at-grade and increasing street presence for the new station.

- Elizabeth Goldstein, MAS
    - Elizabeth seconded the question of why there would not be a more significant train hall presence above ground as part of Penn Expansion. She questioned whether the proposed open space on Block 780 would be an attractive, comfortable space used by the public and posited that perhaps that space would better serve as a train hall for the new station.
    - There need to be more transit entrances on Seventh and Eighth Avenues to bring light and air into the subway stations.
    - We need to better understand all the alternatives considered for transit entrances, a train hall, and public realm for Penn Expansion.
    - We need to think about thermal comfort across the entire ESC Project public realm to maximize the duration throughout the year in which the public realm is useable and comfortable. MAS has studied this topic in its "Fight for Light" campaign and knows the importance of sunlight to make public realm spaces work for people. Lot coverage controls for the towers are not going to matter if thermal comfort is not great. It would be helpful to have a study on how the proposed building requirements in the Design Guidelines affect thermal comfort. MAS would support bigger or taller buildings if that would result in more thermal comfort.
    - MAS agrees that large chain retail does not contribute to a vibrant neighborhood. In addition to designing spaces ideal for small retail, can we subsidize or otherwise financially support small retail in the buildings?
- Tom Wright, RPA (via Zoom Chat)
    - I agree that One Vanderbilt works very well, but I think what both Tokumbo and Felicia are getting to is the design of the "Penn South" expansion and whatever happens on the 780 block is going to be very important to the success of this effort, including creating outdoor spaces and a civic space for Empire Station. It is a huge opportunity to create the kind of station we all want — without needing to move a sports arena or demolish an office tower. It would be great to see a full range of alternatives for the 780 block and even look at examples from other transit stations around the world that do this well or badly. I'd love to see more prototypes.
- Raju Mann, NYC Council
    - It seems like a missed opportunity and perhaps shortsighted to not build a new above-ground station on Block 780, given the projections on increased ridership on NJ Transit. The comparison to the One Vanderbilt transit entrance is not apt because the entrance there is an appendage to an existing station, and we don't know how the entrance operates at full capacity because the building has not yet fully opened.
    - The setbacks outlined in the presentation and Design Guidelines of 200' and 75% of the overall building height do not seem to be enough to achieve the desired architectural and urban design variety.
    - What will the identity of the district be moving forward? The most compelling urban design rationale that has been presented so far is the net zero goal for all the buildings. How does net zero translate to building design? What do net zero buildings look like?
    - The midblock train hall proposal seems like it would not actually work without drastic measures on 31st Street, such as closing it to traffic, to handle increased pedestrian traffic.
- Layla Law Gisiko, CB5

- The proposed development seems out of context with the area. The Design Guidelines should ensure that the proposed new buildings make better connections with the surrounding neighborhood.
- ESD should reconsider the elimination of streetwall continuity and height limits and should evaluate daylight and shadows. CB5 believes that these controls are important tools to create a livable, human-scale district.
- Street recesses in front of buildings should not be allowed, as they do not improve the public realm or circulation.
- The enhanced lobby does not improve connectivity or activate the street because it is not clear to people that these spaces are open to the public and end up only serving the private users of the building.
- Can you confirm the proposed use for the new building on Site 4 under the ESC GPP? And what was the proposed use for Site 4 under the Moynihan GPP?
  - The DEIS analyzed both office/hotel use and a residential alternative for Site 4. If the residential alternative is included in the final GPP, the Design Guidelines will be modified to allow residential use here.
  - The Moynihan GPP proposed hotel and residential use for Site 4.
- Development on Sites 4 and 5 would encroach on the existing POPS for One Penn. How much square footage of POPS would be lost?
  - ESD will post the square footage of the POPS and the potential number of square feet lost to Huddle.
- The POPS on Sites 4 and 5 were built in exchange for increased density at the time of construction of One Penn Plaza. After Sites 4 and 5 are developed and the POPS are partially or totally eliminated, what would happen to the extra density that One Penn Plaza received?
  - ESD and Vornado are looking at this issue.
- Is Site 5 being merged with One Penn Plaza?
  - Site 5 is not being merged with One Penn Plaza. The Design Guidelines anticipate that the base of One Penn Plaza will be shortened to facilitate the base of Site 5.
- Can we have a presentation on the Design Guidelines controls and parameters for Sites 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8?
  - The Design Guidelines are consistent across the sites and will continue to be refined between draft and final. None of the buildings on any of the sites are designed at this time.

- Eugene Sinigalliano, Resident
  - Will the plans for the "Below Penn Station Alternative" and "Northern Alternative" for Penn Expansion be presented to the CACWG?
    - MTA will be publishing an Alternatives Evaluation Report upon receiving approval from Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") as part of the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") process. This report will not contain detailed plans of these alternatives but will focus on an evaluation of how well each alternative meets the purpose and goals of the Penn Expansion project and consideration of minimizing environmental impacts.
    - The Railroads have done some planning work on all alternatives as part of prior projects. The "Below Penn Station Alternative" is similar to East Side Access, meaning the two stations would be essentially independent rather than integrated. The Northern Alternative is essentially the same as the former ARC project, which also envisioned a totally separate station.
    - Tom Wright of RPA wrote in the Zoom Chat that RPA has looked closely at both the "Below Penn" and "Northern" alternatives and concluded that they have fatal flaws from

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a performance standpoint. They have severe limitations for the railroads and would not provide service comparable to the "Penn South" expansion.

- Marilyn Taylor, UPenn
  - Marilyn concurred with others that we cannot select a scheme that precludes future adaptation to emerging ideas and needs in the years ahead. The opportunities of the future will be very different than today.
- Jeffrey LeFrancois, CB4
  - Why are retail and community facility uses grouped together as the same color in the legend on the maps in the presentation? As others have mentioned, chain stores do not enliven the streetscape and often sterilize the neighborhood. They also often take up more sidewalk space and cause problems with inventory loading. The community in this area needs more community spaces. Will there be any minimum amount of community facility uses that the developers of the GPP sites must provide?
    - ESD included community facility in the legend to highlight the objective of having a mix of retail and community uses on the ground floors of Sites 1-3.
    - For Sites 1, 2 and 3, which the State will most likely own and RFP, the State can require or give a preference to proposals that provide meaningful community facility uses in some of these spaces.

10. <u>QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS POSTED IN ZOOM CHAT OR POST-CACWG FOLLOW-UP</u>

- Christine Berthet, CB4
  - On Slide 42, why does it say Penn Station when it is the entrance to MSG?
  - How does this work with lines of sight?
  - What will be the ceiling height in various parts of the Penn Expansion given the presence of buildings above?
  - Will the controls include height and maintaining the line of sight for the Empire State Building from the west from the 33rd Street station entrance and from Manhattan West?
  - Frequent loading entrances are a major issue with pedestrians, and their size and placement should be specified in the Design Guidelines. They should be entirely within buildings, shared between buildings, a maximum of one per block or half block on very large blocks, and sized to accommodate both the increase in deliveries and the buildings tradecraft. Their entrances should be a minimum of 30 feet away from transit entrances. Whenever possible, they should be subterranean.
  - ConEd grids should be installed in loading areas and not on sidewalks where they reduce the walking space.
  - Lobbies should not be allowed to be 100 feet. At most, they should only be 60 feet and only on side streets, not on the avenues. Lobbies really deaden the pedestrian experience if 50% of the frontage is lobby space.
  - Lobbies should not be recessed. This cannot count for pedestrian improvements, and it is a real challenge to manage from a quality of life standpoint.
  - ESD should consider putting all the retail spaces and class 2 and 3 office space in a condo owned by a Land Trust to be managed by a local entity jointly with landlords. The rents could be set up to be affordable and community space provided as part of it. https://tacklingcommercialgentrification.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/affordable-commercial-space-final-1-2.pdf
  - From a style standpoint, the whole retail layer could be split in two levels, as it used to be in midtown, with one store or two stores. There could be a requirement for this layer to be clad in stone and steel to be reminiscent of Moynihan. At a minimum, this style could apply to 31st Street. This would make for a great pedestrian experience and statement.
- Felicia Park-Rogers, TSTC

- Is there a rendering of the light tunnel/train hall between 31st and 30th Streets over Block 780?
- Perhaps Moynihan can fill the void of a station for the Expansion, similar to how Grand Central is the station for East Side Access.
- This park is an example of a park in a very dense area with many tall buildings, and yet they have built a highly successful public space and park and plaza with many great sitting and group areas. https://untappedcities.com/2020/12/30/nyc-waterline-square-park/.
- This is also a well-used, nicely designed plaza/park space that meets Elizabeth's criteria of year-round usability: https://www.downtownbrooklyn.com/listings/metrotech-commons.

11. CONCLUSION

- Marion Phillips reminded CACWG members to be mindful of when their camera is turned on and then closed CACWG #8.